

Refugee Working Group

Recommendations Received as of May 21, 2007

I. List of Core Values/Problems

1. Access

- a. Assign appropriate agencies to identify and quantify current languages covered by interpreters in the state (or contract with non-profit to complete task).
- b. Develop statewide interpreter bank funded with membership dues from city, state, and county governments as well as participating private non-profits.
- c. Seek legislation requiring certification of paid interpreters and translators who meet minimum standards. Such standards could be similar to the standards used by the Department of Health's Bridges Program.
- d. Make a list of all "certified agencies" and their scope of work including the time they serve refugees. Promote coordination and networking between all available resources in the community.
- e. Work with ethnic organizations to become a staff resource for the above statewide bank. Training, marketing, billing would be provided by central bank while local organizations would identify people needing and providing services. A portion of the funding would be provided to these organizations without them having to incur all the costs of operation such a service.
- f. Collaborate by holding a forum with other services addressing language barriers, including state and local government, higher education language departments, and non-profits to develop a strategic plan to address interpretation/translation solutions.
- g. Consider an approach similar to the Multicultural Health Network's CLAS (Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services) committee in determining applied standards to these services.
- h. Request an inventory of current ESL services available.
- i. Increase or set aside 10% of ESL program funding to fund new innovative ESL projects for refugees.
- j. Evaluate after 1 year and reassess ESL gaps.
- k. Use paid interpretive services to provide resources to train general and specialized translators.
- l. Replicate specialized refugee teams used by the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), the Department of Health and Salt Lake County within other health care programs and social service departments within state and county government.
- m. Ask for a commitment from agencies serving refugees to help refugee populations express their needs to health care and human services providers by facilitating participating on committees and/or councils if possible, completing surveys, and/or providing written comments that can be directed to leadership.
- n. Work with refugee organizations and other providers to create social opportunities for elderly refugees to be with others from their culture/language.
- o. Create a network of volunteers with language/cultural similarities who will support older refugees with no family in their lives.
- p. Translate bus and Trax information into multiple languages.
- q. Encourage agencies working with refugees to provide additional support to help refugees navigate the mass transit system.
- r. Seek discounted bus fares from UTA for refugees in their program who are working or seeking employment.
- s. Seek discounted UTA passes for refugees seeking healthcare treatment.
- t. Work with UTA, ethnic community groups, and refugee employment providers to develop vanpools and pick up points to transport refugees to work sites.

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- u. Refer refugees with medical needs who are over 55 to the Salt Lake County Aging Services Transportation Program. Recruit and develop volunteers who speak native refugee languages.
 - v. Develop a volunteer transportation program similar to the one operated by Salt Lake County Aging Services to transport refugees who are under 55 to medical appointments.
 - w. Work with ethnic organizations to become an arm of the proposed refugee transportation program. Provide centralized administrative functions while local ethnic organizations identify and recruit volunteers from the community. Provide funding to these organizations for this service.
 - x. Provide more trained and paid interpreters and translators.
 - y. Encourage and help ESL providers to bring their services to the refugee communities by creating community based classrooms in high-density refugee residential areas.
 - z. Improve the system of dissemination of information among refugees with regard to services and benefits available to them. This improvement will happen if disclosure of all available services and benefits becomes mandatory during case management and other refugee service procedures across the state and in all agencies.
 - aa. Encourage open and competitive grant application system and effectively ensure that rules are followed and applied equally.
2. Inclusion
- a. Coordinate efforts through a state agency to bring together community development entities, banks, minority councils, refugee and other service providers to map out connections, disconnects, needs and opportunities.
 - b. Identify specific development opportunities, have an organization or state agency facilitate collaborative projects using an asset-based community development approach.
 - c. Require all refugee service providers, state and local government, and organizations to send information and communicate with all groups about all programs. Provide email addresses and contact information to these groups and organizations and ask to be included in their communication process.
 - d. Follow up and urge access to needed health care through public programs. Repeat examinations periodically to determine if adequate treatment is occurring.
 - e. Locate Refugee State Coordinator within a new office.
 - f. Create a coordinating office for refugee services, which will have much more clout than the current refugee coordinator's office in the Department of Workforce Services. The new, empowered coordinator must be creative in bringing private funding to bear in supplementing federal, state, and other public funding. The new coordinator's office would also serve as a coordinator for all resources currently available to refugees in Utah but are currently working piecemeal or are not being used as all. The new office would be charged with educating the public about refugees and immigrants and spearheading the effort in Utah for effective integration of newcomers.
 - g. Establish a refugee ombudsman, apart from the State Refugee Coordinator, to handle complaints realizing that refugees have a difficult time expressing concerns about provider services since they often feel so dependent upon the service providers in the initial stages.
3. Empowerment
- a. Recommend that resettlement offices identify empowerment models, which can be implemented in their case management efforts.
 - b. Allow additional time (more than the current 6 months) for resettlement agencies to provide empowerment focused case management services with refugees.
 - c. Have agencies providing case management services identify existing conflict resolution systems' access points and assist refugees to better access these services.

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- d. Involve non-refugee organizations with expertise in community empowerment to focus some of their efforts on serving refugee groups. For instance, Neighborhood Housing Services in partnership with the University of Utah has an excellent ten-week community leadership workshop that they offer in English and Spanish. Approached NHS/U of U to determine if they're willing to provide similar training for refugee groups.
 - e. Support refugee communities in taking ownership of resettlement through creation and funding of Mutual Assistance Associations (MAA) and other grassroots community organizations.
 - f. Empower refugee community organizations by including refugee community organizations in all planning and policy discussions.
 - g. Fund organizational capacity building and space for meetings.
 - h. Deliver sufficient education and skill training that must enable family-sustaining earnings in refugee communities.
 - i. Build institutional capacity of refugee associations that empowers them to pursue the sustained well-being of their members. Listen to the voices of the refugee associations.
 - j. Provide refugee associations and individuals with training on the needs of and services available to the elderly and their caregivers.
 - k. Appoint refugees and refugees associations to refugees related policy boards. This will facilitate better integration into the host community, inclusion and engagement in decision-making that results in better understanding and adaptation by refugees, their representatives and the host community.
 - l. Provide refugee communities with education on laws, policies and regulations about housing, domestic issues, youth issues, and contracts. This goal will be achieved by offering training to refugee associations and individuals.
 - m. Support the creation of efficient indigenous conflict resolution structures in refugee communities. A good way of giving this support will be through funding these structures and/or giving official recognitions to refugee community leaders who invest great amount of time and resources in resolving conflicts within the community. Government support will save taxpayers great amount of money that is traditionally spent on litigation, translation, interpretation, and possible incarceration fees in connection to these conflicts in refugee families and community.
4. Cultural sensitivity and Respect
- a. Provide trainings and seminars to state employees, service providers, teachers, community and city councils, and employers on cultural issues.
 - b. Require contracted entities to demonstrate efforts to increase cultural competencies among their staff.
 - c. Require all state, county and city agencies to receive standardized diversity training and certification. In addition, private worksites should be encouraged to offer diversity training to all employees.
 - d. Encourage major religious groups to address the issue of cultural sensitivity.
 - e. Work with faith-based organizations to get buy-in to promote diversity training throughout the City.
 - f. Make cultural competency part of refugee services job requirements.
 - g. Utilize refugee community organizations for cultural sensitivity training in agencies that service refugees.
 - h. Create a system that proactively identifies and increases numbers of qualified individuals among refugees to work in state and community structures that service refugees.
 - i. Provide regular cultural competency trainings for staff.
 - j. Solicit and support feedback from the refugee community.
 - k. Incorporate community involvement through empowerment instead of punitive based case management efforts.

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- l. Request each refugee service provider to provide feedback opportunities for refugees through their websites
 - m. Create a website that contains an access point for refugees and have refugee service providers facilitate refugee access to it.
5. Lack of cooperation between refugees and services providers
 - a. Recognize existing monthly coordination meetings between providers and government entities and apply model towards specific services such as mental health, protective services, childcare, and education. Increase efforts to invite refugees to meetings.
 - b. Update available resource guides and coordinate with 211 Services.
 - c. Coordinate asset mapping utilizing university students from various college and university departments.
6. Lack of a statewide vision of what constitutes good resettlement policy
 - a. More fairness and training for those involved in the resettlement process – empowering refugees in the resettlement process.
 - b. Assign one state agency, along with a policy board, to oversee the coordination of all state agencies and private organizations involved in refugee resettlement to see that the highest possible quality of service is provided by and to all. The state refugee coordinator position is federally mandated and needs to be adequately supported with resources and authority.
 - c. Hold statewide conference to specifically address this issue.
 - d. Develop a strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of the refugee service system.
 - e. Create a Bureau of Refugee Coordination to provide coordination within the government.
 - f. Separate the development and evaluation of policy from the implementation of the policy. The State Refugee Coordinator position could focus on policy development and evaluation while monitoring and program evaluation functions could be contracted out.
 - g. The State Refugee Coordinator's office should be positioned in state government to effectively advocate for refugees and structured so that refugees, advocates and service providers have meaningful input to policy decision-making.
 - h. Analyze the success of the State in developing a coordinated homeless services system and a comprehensive homeless policy. Use a similar approach for developing a coordinated refugee service system and policy.
7. Demand for services is greater than current resources
 - a. Identify available resources before determining what funds are needed to address gaps. Create an inventory of current funding and existing partnerships, including level of Federal funding, state funding, local city and county funding, as well as acknowledging the private sector's generosity.
 - b. For all of these purposes, see to it that adequate state and private resources are added to the available federal resources to get the job done.
 - c. Form a group of state, county, city, and private leaders to raise additional funding, public and private, for refugees and immigrants.
 - d. Develop a strategic funding plan to identify specific areas in which funding can be increased on local and state levels. An appointed task force could carry this out and report back to the Governor and Mayor by fall to prepare for the Legislature in 2008.
 - e. Access dedicated funding streams for specific problems rather than relying on refugee monies to meet the broad range of needs. Refugees are residents of the State and County and are therefore entitled to services provided for mental health, education, housing, etc.
 - f. Develop a funding strategy that does not limit refugee services to refugee dedicated funding. Any agency that has services needed by refugees would be required to develop a plan on how to meet those needs.
 - g. Contract with government agencies to provide refugee services funded by Federal refugee monies as well as other funds. Require that refugee funding only go to agencies that are

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also going to leverage those services with their own monies. Explore giving preference to agencies that provide a match.

- h. Create central point of government coordination and advocacy for refugee services in this area—i.e. Bureau of Refugee Coordination.
- i. Explore potential mentorship sources and urge community organizations to make personalized mentoring available.
- j. Identify mentoring organizations and connect them with refugee community organizations, in order to help them to optimally develop.
- k. Assign existing volunteer coordination services to develop a coordinated recruitment and training program for refugee mentors and volunteers. Develop and assign a small team of such mentors and volunteers rather than a single person who can easily be overwhelmed or so burnt out that they do not continue. A volunteer coordinator could assist resettlement agencies and other refugee providers as well as develop a system of volunteers for refugees who are not clients of any specific agency.

II. Accountability

- 1. Structural issues
 - a. Create an independent state refugee structure that will coordinate refugee issues and service providers' actions. This structure may be directly under the governor's office and serve as the accountability office for refugee service providers.
- 2. Process issues
 - a. Ensure all service providers fully comply with policies and regulations of the US Department of State and other federal and those of state agencies that deal with refugee issues.
 - b. Establish an ongoing independent evaluation of the resettlement agencies as well as and organization that receives funding to provide services to refugee communities.
 - c. Involve refugee community leaders in audit of refugee service providers.

III. Language Barriers

- 1. Lack of English language skills training
 - a. Increase state funding to ESL service by 10%.
 - b. Set goal to increase work place ESL sites by 10 sites in the County within next 12 months. Have leaders meet with CEOs to encourage employers to accept classes and allow employees to attend.
 - c. Work with literacy services and Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs), who focus on assisting people who are not literate in their native language, to expand their programs to serve illiterate refugees.
 - d. See that English as a second language instruction is available in the home or elsewhere accessible for those providing child care and at accessible times for those employed and urge all to prepare themselves adequately in that regard.
 - e. Find immediately sufficient employment for enough numbers of family members to provide at least temporary adequate family income to meet all survival needs.
 - f. Increase specialized English language training for older refugees, which is designed for the leaning processes of older people and whose goals reflect reasonable standards for this population. Include training, which is designed to provide life skills, including medical literacy, and citizenship preparation.

IV. Case Management

- 1. Longer periods of case management are needed to ensure refugees are connecting with appropriate services after initial resettlement period.
 - a. Re-examine current case management system and consider increasing funding to resettlement agencies to extend case management services beyond current time frame, for perhaps as long as five years, so refugees who have significant barriers to integration and

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- who are likely to be confused by a change in services can continue with familiar case managers and case management systems.
- b. Provide sufficient state funding to enable the resettlement agencies to have adequate case managers and other staff to meet the requirements of the current and potential numbers of refugees in becoming housed, taught English, employed, and integrated into the community. Then see that the staff are adequately trained and supervised to contribute to the accomplishment of the following, which should be primary objectives of all concerned with the well-being of the refugee community.
 - c. Identify and provide additional funding to the resettlement agencies to provide empowerment based case management services for up to 18 months after arrival. Estimated cost: \$360,000 -\$400,000 (4 additional empowerment caseworkers x 2 agencies = 8 full-time caseworkers).
 - d. Develop a case management strategy that utilizes and combines the strengths of organizations in a collaborative effort to assist a refugee family rather than rely on a strategy that gives all the responsibility to a single agency for a specific amount of time and then transfers all the responsibilities to another agency.
2. Lack of case management by professionals within the refugee population for continued assistance or increased cultural competency of case managers
- a. Mandate each agency to define case management and their scope of case management.
 - b. Require each school district to have a refugee service coordinator.
 - c. Identify a general case management description.
 - d. Implement a coordinated case management model for individual refugees.
 - e. Expand specialized refugee teams at state agencies, increase the role of case managers, and improve training and cultural competency.
 - f. Develop a strategic approach supports advocacy and coordination between systems to ensure there is access to all of the resources available, not just refugee specific resources.
 - g. Create a position, which will coordinate, train, assign and oversee mentors.
 - h. gather and disperse information to refugees, service providers, advocates, and mentor, ensure that all groups related to refugees have effective channels of communication.
 - i. Coordinate volunteer training and advocacy.
 - j. Implement a promotora for training 300 caseworkers within the refugee community to help their own communities.
 - k. Provide paid and unpaid volunteers/mentors.
 - l. Recognize refugees who have been doing case management within the refugee community.
 - m. Each established case management organization implements a common case management program that includes enrollment, assessment of needs, planning of needs, implementation of the plan, monitoring and evaluation of the plan, and termination of case management at the appropriate time.
 - n. All service providers working with refugees receive general case management training in order that all have a common understanding how the term is being used as pertains to refugees in UT.
 - o. Policy makers from the various government entities that relate to refugees meet together and develop a better structure for managing refugee services in Utah.
 - p. Policy makers from the various government entities that relate to refugees should consider increasing the power of the State Refugee Coordinator's office.
 - q. Develop a unified case management record system that can be used by all service providers.
 - r. Develop and fund a case management system that oversees refugee cases from the end of Reception and Placement services (R&P) to case closure.
 - s. Recognize and identify need for specialized case management i.e., high-risk health, refugees in U.S. over 5 years, mental health, victims of torture, etc.
 - t. Maintain case management with refugee resettlement agencies for up to 5 years.

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- u. Identify non-federal resources to continue case management beyond 5 years.
- v. Provide adequately trained case managers and other staff to meet the integration needs of refugees into their new community.
- w. Put in place a mechanism to train and employ more case managers from within the refugee communities.
- x. Mandate longer periods of case management by allowing resettlement agencies to handle individual cases for about 5 years.
- y. Enforce existing accountability policies and establish viable structures to ensure case managers and their employers take full responsibility in creating culturally sensitive environments and best practices in refugee support.
- z. Require that refugee service providers make a deliberate effort to match case managers and clients who speak the same language.
- aa. Need more pro bono professional services in diverse areas for the refugee population to address long-term successful resettlement in Utah i.e., services for women, legal representation, higher education, home ownership plan, etc.

V. Employment and Self-Sufficiency

1. Refugees need help entering employment with higher wages so basic family needs are met.
 - a. Provide on-the-job training opportunities for refugees with clearly defined and realistic objectives for placement in higher paying job sectors.
 - b. Find immediately sufficient employment for enough numbers of family members to provide at least temporary adequate family income to meet all survival needs.
 - c. Expand intensive employment assistance programs to include refugees without technical or professional skills.
 - d. Remove the requirement that refugees need to be employed in order to participate [in the Family Employment Program- this is not really a requirement – there are other work-related options such as community service, education, etc. Their frustration is with the TANF law and new Federal regulations requiring us to strictly adhere to Federal requirements Maybe the recommendation should be to ask Congress to change the law to accommodate the unique needs of refugees?].
 - e. Develop working relations with professional and trade organizations to mentor refugees. Develop a program for refugee women.
2. Additional education and training is needed for career advancement and wage progression.
 - a. Identify short term training technical schools and centers for skills enhancement
 - b. Utilize existing software that facilitates language acquisition. Encourage service providers to remain open in alternative time frames with minimal tutoring.
 - c. Increase the number of training providers that offer courses during non-traditional hours such as evenings or weekends.
 - d. Arrange for those responsible for family support over the long run to obtain sufficient education and skill training to achieve family-sustaining earnings.
 - e. Expect refugee adults to use all of their existing capabilities and develop further capabilities to adequately support their families. Expect refugee children and youth to prepare themselves adequately to support following generations.
3. [Lack of] Child care [for other than employment e.g. ESL, acculturation/survival training, etc.]
4. Simultaneously available employment / skills training
5. Refugees face language barriers in the workplace
 - a. Identify employers who are supportive of addressing language needs in work place and recommend refugee service providers develop better working relationships with those identified.
 - b. Educate employers on refugee and their contribution to the community.

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- c. Recommend that refugee community groups and service providers attend United Way's English Language Opportunity Summit planned for June 2007. Employers will be attending to better understand how to address this problem.
- 6. Lack of acceptance and acknowledgement of foreign education, especially higher education degrees, certification, and credentials by employers.
 - a. Support refugees in the process of accreditation, re-certification and transferring their education.
 - b. Create a better system to recognize academic credentials that refugees bring to the state (e.g. alternative licensing routes).
- 7. Physical and mental health issues may be barriers to employment
- 8. Lack of resources and education for refugee women, women's issues
 - a. Establish a Refugee Women's Center, within a Bureau of Refugee Coordination [mentioned above], to focus on this issue and provide refugee women with a forum to advocate for women's issues.
 - b. Identify existing and/or develop new resources for women's education and issues.
- 9. Will refugees be able to choose Match Grant?
 - a. Educate refugees and volunteers about the Match Grant Program's availability, requirements, and limitations.

VI. Community Development and Preservation

- 1. Refugee community needs lodging and gathering places/space to reconnect and become a community again
 - a. Connect refugees with established local community resource and provide increased access and better utilization of the community assets in place—role of refugee service providers (to help access) and community centers (to seek out and allow users within the refugee community).
 - b. Educate community
 - c. Create community-gathering places/space to allow refugee community building. These community spaces will be run by and for refugees.
 - d. Create an International Friendship Center.
- 2. Lack of small business opportunities or micro-enterprise development
 - a. Identify collaborative group to seek out an Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) micro-enterprise grant for FY2008 and submit grant from Utah.
 - b. Support new small business development.
- 3. Refugees need time, tools, and opportunities to maintain their artistic and cultural traditions and heritage
- 4. Media, Education of public, cultural sensitivity, cultural competency
 - a. Develop speaker's bureau to promote refugee related issues and positive, respectful messages, and educational opportunities for service providers, civic groups and the general public.
- 5. World Refugee Day
 - a. Continue annual tradition of celebration World refugee day
- 6. Positive contact with police/ education

VII. Youth Services

- 1. Services for youth services, cultural competency of providers
 - a. Identify youth resources in community and determine point of access for refugee children.
 - b. Provide cultural competency training to youth service agencies.
 - c. Work closely with school districts to assure culturally sensitive education for children and youth and preparation for continuance into postsecondary education and skill training

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- d. Create better access to organized sports and recreational youth activities through funding provided to community centers and organizations that promote such activities (for example, institutionalize trophy and equipment donations in support of spring and summer soccer games that refugee youth organize).
- 2. Ensure child welfare services are cultural sensitive. Need supplemental education services
 - a. Create better access to tutoring and mentorship programs for refugee students.
- 3. Need parent/child/school communication
 - a. Establish case management support system to bridge gap between parents and schools.
- 4. Cross cultural competencies
- 5. Gang and crime prevention
- 6. Need services to address more severe youth and family issues

VIII. Housing

- a. Establish a mechanism to support safe and affordable housing for refugees in a manner that allows them to have control over where they live with regard to allowing families to live within close proximity to family and other social support systems (for help with day care and transportation to work, for example).
- b. Replicate the University Neighborhood Partnership model of Hartland in other locations.
- c. Urge initiation and maintenance of applications for subsidized housing and urge exploration of home ownership possibilities at relevant times
- d. Include refugee service providers in local and state housing coordination boards to address refugee housing needs as part of the overall low-income housing planning process.

IX. Health

- a. Develop a strategic approach to ensuring each newly arriving refugee is assigned a medical home with a primary care provider and understands how to access these services.
- b. Map out points of entry into the health care system for refugees.
- c. Follow up and urge access to needed health care through public programs. Repeat examinations periodically to determine if adequate treatment is occurring.
- d. Evaluate Medicaid regulations to determine whether they allow for increased eligibility or funding caring for refugees for longer periods of time.
- e. Allow better and more extensive services that address physical and mental health issues. To create such a favorable environment actions must be taken to improve access to Medicaid, additional coverage, and a primary care provider for individual refugees and their families.
- f. Physical and mental health issues from war trauma are longer lasting and need extended services not currently available.
- g. Urge the State to make some funds available that would allow mental health providers to provide treatment to refugees who have been in the US for several years that will increase the amount of refugees able to return to work and help them to become American citizens.
- h. Establish outreach team among providers to provide mental health services to refugees refractory to traditional mental health programs and establish appropriate referral system. Fund through state, county, city partnerships.
- i. Expand Medicaid coverage (amount of time and services available)
- j. Increase Medicaid application response time.
- k. The newly empowered refugee coordinator and a group of experts should be assembled by to discuss and decide upon a plan and a structure, which results in the realization of a need a medical home for refugees who initially resettled, and secondary migrated to the state.